

Interview Transcript

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Interviewee: Sister Kathy Stein

Interviewer: Shannon Green, Director, CSJ Institute, Mount Saint Mary's University; Kelby Thwaits, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University; Mary Trunk, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University; Nakorn Chaisri, Camera Operator, Mount Saint Mary's University, Film and Television.

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Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:16.17] SHANNON GREEN: Today is Wednesday, April 4, 2018. This is Mount Saint Mary's University, CSJ Oral History Project, filming at Carondelet Center, Shannon Green interviewing Sister Kathy Stein, with Kelby Thwaits and Mary Trunk.

[00:00:33.16] SHANNON GREEN: Okay. Sister Kathy, would you start us out by stating your full name and your age?

[00:00:38.10] SISTER KATHY STEIN: My full name in religious life is Sister Katherine Mary Stein, but seldom am I called that. I'm Sister Kathy Stein, and I'm sixty-eight years old.

[00:00:50.12] SHANNON GREEN: Sister Kathy, would you tell us a little bit about where you were born, your childhood, what your family life was like when you were growing up?

[00:00:56.29] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Little bit about my early life. I was born in Los Angeles [California], and my parents had been married for quite a few years before I was born. They were married and my dad went to World War II, so he was gone for five years. And when he came back--my mother was a nurse--and they started their life together. My mom got pregnant. She was very, very excited--with twins--and had an accident, fell down the stairs, and miscarried her twins. And at that point they didn't think they were going to be able to have another child. And lo and behold, several years later, I came along. So, I was raised as an only child, and in a very loving family. I was very, very fortunate with my mom and dad. In fact, my mother passed away a couple of years ago at age 102. [laughs]. So, God has been very good to us in our family.

[00:01:56.03] SHANNON GREEN: What did your parents do for a living? You said your mother was a nurse?

[00:01:58.09] SISTER KATHY STEIN: My mother was a nurse--she was an OB [obstetrics] nurse in a hospital for many years. And then after I was born and started school, she was a school nurse in the school where I attended--Our Lady of Grace in Encino [California]. My parents moved to Encino when I was a year old and lived in that house until my mother died a couple of years ago. So, a lot of stability in the family. My dad was a butcher--and so, I grew up on steak and red meat. [laughs]. And he worked for Vons grocery company for forty years--a butcher and then in supervision for Vons.

[00:02:38.00] SHANNON GREEN: Were you a very religious family?

[00:02:40.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Were we a religious family? People often ask that, and my parents would always laugh when they asked it, because they would say, "Oh, we were never the kind of family that would say the Rosary every night." But I would say we were a religious family. We were involved in our parish, and faith was important in our home. It was just a given--God was present. My mother had a great devotion to the Blessed Mother. And so, it was just part of the life I grew up with. My dad's--I would say--favorite sister was a Benedictine Sister at St. Lucy's Priory in Glendora [California]. And so, I grew up, once a month going to Visiting Sunday with my parents to visit Sister Serena [??]. So, faith was an important part of our family. As my parents became older and retired, they were both very involved in the parish. They were both eucharistic ministers, and my mother counted money on Mondays practically until the day she died. So, God was always part of my life.

[00:03:48.27] SHANNON GREEN: Did visiting your aunt at the Benedictine monastery--did that have an influence on you, do you think?

[00:03:56.03] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Interestingly enough, no. Probably the opposite, because as a child I remember having to dress up and sit still and listen and be good when I would go. Now, that wasn't my aunt's fault--that was just what my parents expected of me. And religious life at that point, when I was growing up, was very strict. My aunt couldn't eat with us. When my grandparents passed away, my aunt was not able to go to the home. And so that was not appealing to me. My mother tells the story--or told a story--that when I was very small one of the Sisters was very excited to see me. And so, she came from behind me and swooped me up and terrified me. And so, apparently for years after that, every time I would see a nun I would just have a meltdown. I couldn't handle it--in church--no matter where we were. My mother would have to kind of direct me otherwise. So, my vocation did not start in my very early life. [laughs].

[00:05:05.11] SHANNON GREEN: When did you first meet the Sisters of St. Joseph [CSJs]?

[00:05:08.09] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I met the Sisters of St. Joseph at the Mount, in college. I had Immaculate Heart Sisters in grammar school, and Sisters of St. Louis in high school. And then I spent four years at the Mount, and that's where I became acquainted with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

[00:05:24.13] SHANNON GREEN: And so, when you were in grade school or high school you were not considering religious life at that time?

[00:05:29.23] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I was not. No. I never--I always wanted brothers and sisters, and so I always wanted a large family. I had this fantasy that I was going to have ten children. And so, it--religious life wasn't something that I considered for myself. And I also dated and you know--it just wasn't something that appealed to me.

[00:05:52.27] SHANNON GREEN: Was pursuing higher education important to you and your family?

[00:05:57.28] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Very important. It was a given. And I think my mother prayed me into the Mount, because I had assumed I would go away. Many of my friends were going away to college after high school. And so, I applied to the Mount. I knew it was an excellent school, but I really thought I would go away. So, I applied sort of to make my mom happy. And I was accepted into several other places. And I think it was the hand of God that I just knew that's where I was going to go. And I remember my mom being so surprised when I said I'd made my decision, "I'm going to the Mount." She, "Really?" [laughs]. But it was right. And I have never for a moment regretted my decision. I lived at home the first semester, and then I moved in and lived there for the next four years.

[00:06:48.10] SHANNON GREEN: What did you study at the Mount?

[00:06:50.17] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I was a--I started as a Spanish major. And I got to a point where--I remember Sister Aloysius Gonzaga [Puricelli] was my advisor, and I was in a class with all native speakers. And I was--I couldn't keep up with the native speakers. And she suggested that I continue with my study of Spanish, but it might be wise to look at another major. [laughs]. She was very gentle, and it was very good advice. And I will always be grateful for my education in Spanish, because I use it every day now. So, I literally walked up and down the hallways of the academic advisors of the Mount, and saw Sister Rose Catherine [Clifford (1908-1999)] in one of the offices. And she was very nice, and she said, "Oh, honey, come in and let's talk. What are you doing?" I said, "I'm looking for a major." She said, "How about History?" I said, "Okay, well, that sounds good." So, I became a History major. And I knew I wanted to teach, and so, at that point you could--you didn't major in Education--you majored in something else and then did your credentialing after that.

[00:07:59.08] SHANNON GREEN: One question I forgot to ask earlier about your family--we're now starting to ask Sisters is there an immigration story to your family or how your family came to be in LA or California that you'd like to share.

[00:08:15.02] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Not--no immigration story that's significant. My grandparents and

great-grandparents all were here--they came from Germany. But that--and then they were in the Midwest and came to California. But my dad tells the story of coming out on the train--he hopped the train and came out. So, that was interesting. My mother was a little more stable and would never do anything like that, but--[laughs].

[00:08:46.15] SHANNON GREEN: Thanks. So, what else about your time at the Mount--is this the late Sixties, early Seventies?

[00:08:56.21] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I graduated in '71, so--.

[00:08:59.16] SHANNON GREEN: What was it like at the Mount at that time? I mean, there's a lot going on in the world, in the country, in the Church--what was it like to be a student?

[00:09:08.18] SISTER KATHY STEIN: It was--well the--I loved the Mount. And now, being back involved with the CSJ Institute I'm getting acquainted with the Mount again, and I think, no matter what the era is or what the time is, the Mount responds to the needs. And that's what I found in the Sixties. We didn't realize in the late Sixties that we were living history. But, you know, I think of Martin Luther King's assassination [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968), American civil rights leader], and Robert Kennedy's assassination [Robert Francis Kennedy (1925-1968), American politician]. We used to sit in the lounge--fourth floor lounge--and watch the lottery for our boyfriends being drafted [Vietnam War (1955-1975) draft lottery (1969)], or have news when people's boyfriends were killed during the Vietnam War--the protests. It was quite a turbulent time. And it was a time of change in religious life--the Sisters of St. Joseph. We didn't realize it, because the Sisters were very stable in their relationships with us. But, when I look back, there was great change going on in religious communities, and also in the structuring of the Mount. There was a lot of change going on with departments and student involvement--I think there was much more student involvement during those days. So, those of us who were involved in student government had experiences that we will--we have used for the rest of our lives--Model United Nations [1954??--present], student government, as I said--outreach--it was--we learned. And we learned--it was never a question whether I, as a woman, or we, as women, could do something. In my family, I was it--I was the only child, so I could do anything as far as my parents were concerned. And it was the same at the Mount. It wasn't a question, "Can you do this? You're a woman." It was just, you do it. And especially if there were needs--responding to the needs.

[00:11:10.18] SHANNON GREEN: Who were some of the Sisters that you remember? You've mentioned a couple already, but would you mind sharing with us some of those--?

[00:11:16.24] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Sister Mary Fredrick Arnold [(-2012)--she was our dorm monitor. She lived on fourth floor in the dorms with us. And Sister Teresita [Espinosa]. Sister Miriam Therese [Larkin (1930-2010)]. And I think back--we all smoked in those days. So, we would be sitting in the fourth floor lounge, in billows of smoke, studying late into the night. And these Sisters would come by and talk to us. I can't even imagine going into the room with all that smoke. But they would. They were there with us, no matter the time of the day or night, or what we were doing. They were a presence with us. And they accepted us for who we were, as we were. And--so, I will always--Sister Cecilia Louise [Moore (1928-2004) was the [MSMC] President at that time. And Sister Eileen Mitchell [aka Sister St. Gerard Mitchell] was on the faculty. Sister Louise Bernstein was one of my teachers. So, it's wonderful now to have some of my mentors still living and be able to once in a while remind me of when I was a student. Sister Miriam Joseph Larkin (1928-2003) has passed on, but she tried to teach me music, and so, many wonderful memories of the Sisters.

[00:11:56.13] SHANNON GREEN: And at that time, did you--did they seem--did the CSJs seem different to you than the other Sisters you'd had in your other educational experiences?

[00:12:42.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I think, in looking back in whether the CSJs were different than other communities I was involved with, at the time I don't think I was conscious of it. I didn't--I couldn't have put words around it. But the Sisters of St. Joseph always seemed like I was home with them. I was myself. And I wouldn't say that I wasn't with other communities, but there was a "comfortable-ness", and an "at-home-ness" with the Sisters of St. Joseph--they were there with us. And so, when it did come time for me to think

about religious life, religious life was a question, never which community.

[00:13:28.07] SHANNON GREEN: So, how did that question come up for you? When was it introduced as a real possibility?

[00:13:33.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Well, you know, as I said, I had always had religious in my life from a very young age. So, religious life was a normal thing to me. But it was just not something that I ever really thought about for myself. And so, when I was at the Mount, I would have to say it was through my friendships with the Sisters who were also studying with me, because at that time the juniors--after they made first vows--they stayed at Carondelet Center, and they studied at the Mount to finish their degree. And so, I had Sisters in class with me. And I remember the two Sisters that I--that were History majors with me--have both left the community now. But they--we used to have study groups. And so, they would invite us down to the House of Studies for our study group. And usually we would study at the college, because we could smoke there. They said, "If you come down to Carondelet Center you really are not going to be able to smoke while we're studying." [laughs]. So, that was okay--we came down sometimes because they were nice and we thought that was an enjoyable thing to do. And then, I don't think they had any idea that I might someday be thinking about this. I think it was just a natural thing. I remember the first time that they said to us, "Well, would you like to come early and go to prayers with us and have dinner, and then we can study afterwards?" And Helen [Anzac??], Sister Mary Brigid's [Sister Mary Brigid Fitzpatrick '47] niece--and Helen was also a History major--and she entered the community the year after I did, and has left since then. But Helen and myself and a couple of others would come down. It was good food and it was nice to go to prayers. There was something calm and peaceful about it. And so, we started doing that. And I think that's where I started seriously thinking, "Hm, I wonder--I wonder if this might be something that I might consider or fit into or--." But it took a little while--[laughs]--for that to become--for me to become comfortable with that. And I remember around that time, I had an aunt that I was very close to who passed away, and my grandmother passed away, and a cousin who was younger than myself was killed in a car accident and passed away. And so, I remember the Sisters and how supportive they were of me during that time. And I remember going to the Chapel at the Mount and sitting there--because it was a difficult time--and I could feel, at that moment, God's presence with me in that journey. And that, and the kindness of the Sisters--I think that was one of the early ways that God started nudging me to think about this.

[00:16:33.27] SHANNON GREEN: When did you start to share this with--maybe your mother, or parents, or others?

[00:16:40.18] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Well, I didn't share it with my friends, because it wasn't something that they would--most of my friends would think that I would be considering. So, I remember walking into Sister Miriam Therese's office one day, and saying, "I need to talk about something." And she said, "What?", thinking it was--I was in her Philosophy class and I was struggling with it. And I said--I'll never forget this because she always would remind me--I said, "I think I have a vocation and I don't know what to do about it!" [laughs]. And I think she was as surprised as I was. And she said, "Oh, well, sit down. Let's talk about it." And that was one of the first times that I really talked to someone about it. That was in--probably the middle of my junior year--toward the end of my junior year. And that was around the time I was coming to House of Studies for prayers and study group, and things were just kind of coming together. I had been in a pretty long-term relationship, and we had decided that we both needed space and we were taking a break. And I wasn't--we weren't sure enough that marriage was what we wanted, and so we decided to take a break. And that was during that time too, which I look back on and think--you know, he's happily married now and has kids, and--it was the right thing. But it was slow--God was slow with me--took me at my own pace. A story that I don't often share, but I think I'm going to share it this time--at the end of my junior year, that summer, my roommate got married. And we'd been friends--we went to high school together, and were roommates at the college, and I hadn't said anything to her, of course about this. And in those days, we used to have--for the bridal shower, we'd have a wedding--a cake, and then put a ring in it. I don't know if they still do that. And the person that got the ring in the cake was the next one to get married--and then, of course, catching the bouquet. So, I told God that--and the odds were pretty slim--that if I got the ring in the cake and caught the bouquet, that I would know that God was really saying to me, you know, maybe this is something you ought to look at. And I knew I would never get both, so that was fine. So, I gave the bridal shower, and cut the cake and we're eating, and I got the ring in the cake. And I was horrified. [laughs]. But I--you know, that was fine. Okay. So, then the day of the wedding comes--I was her maid of

honor. And I was in quite a few weddings during those days, and I'd never caught the bouquet. And I caught the bouquet. And looking back, my friend says, "You had the funniest look on your face." [laughs]. But she figured it was because I was kind of in-between boyfriends and, you know, here I am with the bouquet. I caught the bouquet and it was--now I would look at it as such a gift. If I'm discerning something now, if I had something that strong--that strong a sign--I would--I'd be thrilled. But at that moment, I was just in shock. [laughs]. So, I remember shortly after that, I was talking to my mom, and we were talking about, you know, my wedding and shower and things. And I said to her, "Mom, I think maybe I'm not going to be getting married." And she said, "Really?" And I said, "I just have been struggling with this whole idea about being a Sister." And she hugged me and she said, "I've just been sort of waiting for you to say something about this." And I said, "How'd you know?" And she said that she'd always prayed that God would put in front of me what was right for me. And that she felt that this fit. And I said, "Well, what about Dad?" And she says, "He'll be thrilled. He'll be thrilled because he--you know, his favorite sister is a Sister." And so, I told her the story about the ring in the cake and the bouquet, and I said, "Kind of crazy, but it sure was a sign to me." And so, then, you know, that was the--probably the beginning of my senior year. Then I started seriously looking at it and, you know, talking to more Sisters about it. I was very cautious about my friends, because it was just something that I didn't expect I was going to do, nor would they have expected. And so, I graduated. For my graduation my parents gave me a trip to Hawaii to visit my best friend from high school--I was the godmother of her children. She got married right after high school, and he was in the Navy and they were over there. And I knew I needed to be with her to tell her, because she never would understand this. And so, my parents gave me a trip to Hawaii, and I remember I told [Crissy??] what I was going to be doing. And she was not happy, because she thought she was going to lose our friendship. Fifty-some years later we're still best friends. But I remember the next morning, her husband came in and said, "[Crissy's] so upset. We'll do anything. If you want to live with us, and meet one of my friends, and get married--whatever, you know. Are you sure this is what you want?" And I remember saying, "No, I'm not sure. I'm not sure, but I'm sure that I need to give it a chance. And it's not like getting married--you don't make final vows the day you enter the community. There's a long process, and if it's not right I promise I will not stay." And, forty-six years later, I'm still here. [all laugh].

[00:23:12.16] SHANNON GREEN: And was your father happy as well?

[00:23:16.27] SISTER KATHY STEIN: My dad was very happy. My parents--people would say, "But they're never going to have grandchildren." And that was hard--and it was very hard for me not to have children. But as years went on, it became clear to them--and they often told me this--that the sacrifice they made in not having grandchildren, they received a hundred-fold in not only having me available to them until the end of their lives, but the community called them "Mr. and Mrs. CSJ", because they were at everything. I--you know--they had no place else to go. [laughs]. There was no other kids or grandkids. So, everybody knew them, whether it was when we were novices and my mother would bring cookies every Visiting Sunday, or jubilees and final vows. My mom--I was in formation ministry for many years, and my parents attended more final vow ceremonies and first vow ceremonies than some Sisters do. So, they became part of the community. Rather than me leaving them, they came with me to community. And that was a gift for my entire life, and for theirs.

[00:24:31.02] SHANNON GREEN: So, when you entered in the early Seventies, had--it seems like religious--the formation process would have been changing.

[00:24:41.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yes.

[00:24:42.12] SHANNON GREEN: So, can you share what the--what that was like, and any insight you have now looking back on how things were shifting?

[00:24:51.01] SISTER KATHY STEIN: And that's a good statement--"insight now on how things were shifting" in 1971. We didn't realize how things were shifting. We were Vatican II [Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)] children, and so Vatican II happened when I was in eighth grade. So, there was the external changes in the Church, but it was at a time when we just sort of moved right into the changes. And it was the same in community. Community was changing drastically when we entered. And as I look back--when I was formation director, I looked back on what Sister Miriam Therese and Sister Patricia Zins [(1927-2009)] experienced when they were our formation directors, because community was changing and they were--had

the responsibility of forming these novices in this new way that nobody really knew what it was. So, when I entered, the Sisters no longer wore the habit. But we were the last group to receive a veil. And so, there was--you can imagine--the novices received a veil, and then shortly after that there was a General Chapter, which said Sisters did not have to wear a veil--it was up to them. And so, novices had to be given that choice. And [Sister] Theresa Harpin is in my group, and probably the next day she went to [Sister] Miriam Therese and said, you know, "I'm ready to take off my veil." And little by little, each of us decided not to wear the veil. But that was a difficult time, because as the first group of novices to be given that choice, it was sort of an outward sign of the way things were changing--continuing to change very rapidly. The other thing that was happening, which we didn't realize how significant it was--it was the first time Sisters were moving into smaller local communities. So, when I was at the Mount, there was a group of Sisters who moved out into a community to be with people. And some still ministered at the Mount, and others had other ministries. Ministries were diversifying at that time. Some of our--St. Joseph Center was founded during those years. Those were big things, but we really didn't get it. We didn't--it was just kind of normal to us. But looking back now, when I see the changes that many of our Sisters have gone through, it's phenomenal the amount of change that happened. We--when we made vows--went into local communities and for a few years we had a local Superior, but shortly after that it was--"group government" we called it. It was just natural. We were young Sisters and it was just what we did. Looking back at all that happened to bring the community to that point--the struggle and the pain and the trust--it's amazing. So, when I look at where we are right now in religious life, and we look ahead, and we say, "We don't know where we're going"--as a congregation--as religious life--as Church--probably it's no more drastic than it was in 1968-70, when there was all this change going on in religious life. We forget that those Sisters didn't know what was ahead. We do, now, looking back. But--and so, we don't know what's ahead, but if it's God's will--and it is--and our charism is needed, it will continue--we will continue.

[00:28:42.14] SHANNON GREEN: What was prayer like in community life? Was that the--kind of the spirituality that you had kind of grown into, or was it different than you expected, or was it exciting?

[00:28:56.19] SISTER KATHY STEIN: The spirituality when I was first in community--we prayed the Office [Liturgy of the Hours] at that time at Carondelet Center, at the House of Studies, when we were in initial formation. But we were starting to do "faith-sharing", and that was a big deal. We would have Faith-sharing one night a week. I can still picture the room where we had our Faith-sharing. And so, it was the beginning of--we didn't call it "shared prayer" at that point, but it was the beginning of reading the Scripture for the next Sunday--that's what we would do, and then we would come together and we would talk about it. We didn't realize that was kind of avant-garde, because our--Sister Miriam Therese just sort of moved us into it. So, when we went out on the missions after first vows, we--that wasn't common yet on the missions. Some of us stayed at Carondelet--at the House of Studies--after first vows. I did my student teaching when I was a postulant. So, I had finished my teaching credential, so I was able to go out right away. So, that was a bit of a transition, to go out to the missions. But at that point, we still pretty much prayed the Office. And little by little then--I wouldn't say spirituality was changing, but prayer forms were changing, and more was acceptable. And there was always a couple of people in the community that wanted to get together and have shared prayer in an evening. Also, spiritual direction was something. Right from the beginning, after the novitiate we were encouraged to have a spiritual director. And that was something that I think we were very fortunate--to sort of grow up with that.

[00:31:00.20] [Director's comments.]

[00:31:12.19] KELBY THWAITS: So, think about--when you consider your entrance--your life prior to joining the community, you had a lot of social interactions. You had probably some interesting adventurous times, you know, and yet there were Sisters that made such an impact on you going into the smoke-filled areas, that--you know, you don't necessarily think, "Oh, that's where I would expect to see a Sister", you know?

[00:31:48.11] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Right.

[00:31:50.10] KELBY THWAITS: Did that have--well, I already know--I'm sure that had an effect on you. Did that make an impact in a way that you were then able to reciprocate that? Or I guess a better way to ask that would be, how has that affected you, and have you seen any opportunities or recognized that as you've worked with the community in particular--maybe found anyone like seems kind of like you that you were

able to take under your wing, or anything? If you have any stories that spark, I'd love to hear that--.

[00:32:25.08] [Director's comments].

[00:33:23.06] SISTER KATHY STEIN: The Sisters that we related to at the Mount, who accepted us for who we were and entered into our lives--it's who they were. And what I found for myself--it resonated with who I am. And so, when I entered the community, I found once I was in ministry, that I was able to do for others what the Sisters--during my college years--had done for me--and that was, accepting me as I am and encouraging me to be my best self. And to this day, when I sit with people--I don't think about it, but I hope that's what I'm doing, is being there with them, encouraging them to be who they are, and letting them know that they are important and special, because I can see that in them. I think the Sisters saw God in us. We were their ministry, so I'm sure they did, no matter how crazy we were. And we felt that. There weren't words for it, but we intuited that. And hopefully that's how I am with people to this day in ministry, is seeing God in them, and reciprocating that.

[00:34:49.04] SHANNON GREEN: You wanted to share about what it was like to--

[00:34:51.25] KELBY THWAITS: That was beautiful, and very well spoken, and I think that could be touching to someone who needs it. Thank you.

[00:34:58.05] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Okay. Thank you. When the community--when I started the process to enter the community and talk to the Vocation Director, Sister Mary Brigid [Fitzpatrick '47] was the Provincial then. And I remember very well coming to have my interview with her, and then being accepted. And we found out that Sister Miriam Therese, who was our teacher at the Mount, was appointed Novice Director. So, she was going to be coming with us. And so, we got our lists of what we needed to bring--and in those days we still brought a trunk. We could have three different colors of clothes--we could have navy blue, black, grey--four--and green--we could have green--dark green. I still remember the dark green dress. And so, my mother--she sewed some--not a lot, but she got it together and made dresses for me. And the process of actually entering was not easy. It was not easy to leave my parents, it was not easy to leave my friends, my car, my life--it was difficult. And I look back, and I think it had to be the Grace of God, because I didn't have it in me to be able to do that. It was too painful. Yet, there was something that I knew it was right--I wanted to--I wasn't being forced. But--and I think as we get older we all have those experiences of something can be very painful and very stretching, but be right. And if that's where God is, God gives us the Grace to be able to move through it. And so, those first days and weeks and months were a real change. You know, the schedule--and I was going--still going to the Mount, because I was getting my credential. And so, we would walk up the hill every day, and go to school, yet it was so different from what we were used to. [laughs]. And I--you know, most of my classmates had graduated, but I still knew people. And to one day walk up the hill in this kind of funny-looking blue dress--[laughs]--or odd-colored green, or--and the shoes--the shoes were very different than I was used to. Those were stretching times. And yet, the support that we gave one another--there was eight of us that entered the community at that time--the support of the Sisters--of course, the Sisters at the Mount were thrilled, because there were several of us from that class that entered. So--and then also, the support of my parents. You know, I knew how hard it was for them, but also knew they were supporting me. And they could come and visit once a month. And we were one of the very first groups that got to go home the day after Christmas, for a day--we didn't get to spend the night--but we were able to go home for the day. And so, it just became in my family that Christmas was the 26th of December and--because I would be able to go home then. So, it took time to grow into this new life. And I think--again it's the Grace of God. And I'm sure--as I talk to my friends who at that point were getting married and having children--it's the same thing in whatever life we're in. There are difficult times, that it's--from what I've observed--getting married--there's a lot of stretching, and growing to adjust to that, too. And so, I think God can work through whatever that is, and most of the time we're not aware of it when it's happening. It's only in looking back, when somebody's having their fiftieth wedding anniversary or fiftieth jubilee, that they can see, "Yeah, God was with me all the time, and thank you for helping me stay with it."

[00:39:31.11] SHANNON GREEN: I was going to ask you--because you kept saying we, we, we--like who the "we" is. So, you had classmates from the Mount?

[00:39:39.19] SISTER KATHY STEIN: [Sister] Ingrid Honore-Lallande was at the Mount. We did not know

that we were both in the process of entering. And she tells the story of the day she found out it was me--[laughs]--and then I--the day I found out it was her. We were very, very surprised. Pam Flaherty [Sister Pam Flaherty '70] is in our group, and she was ahead of us. And [Sister] Theresa Harpin was from San Diego. And Theresa is one of ten. And of course, I'm an only child. So, they put us together in the dorm--[laughs]--the only child and one of ten. And we were as different as day and night, and to this day continue to support each other as we move into the future. So, we are the four that are--have remained.

[00:40:36.19] SHANNON GREEN: Were people still entering from high school at that time?

[00:40:40.07] SISTER KATHY STEIN: No. Some had not finished college, but everybody was in college. There was a big group behind us--there was nine--nine or ten behind us. And that's the year Helen [Anzac??] entered. And there was a couple of them that year that were still students at the Mount. But nobody from high school.

[00:41:00.05] SHANNON GREEN: So, it had really transitioned--

[00:41:01.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: --had shifted already. Yeah.

[00:41:04.26] SHANNON GREEN: Was there a--when you were ready--being sent out on the missions--were you feeling more confident, more rooted--by the time you took your final profession?

[00:41:13.28] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yeah. Well, first vows--we went out on missions then. So, we were postulants for one year and novices for two years. So, in our--when we were postulants they called it "going out on mission". We lived in a local community for three months. And I was doing my student teaching, so I went to St. Eugene's and lived there. And I did my public school student teaching while I was at House of Studies, and then did my Catholic school student teaching when I was missioned to St. Eugene's. So, it was a very good experience of community life, and for me, ministry, because it was what I wanted to do. Then when I was a novice, they tried to send us farther away, at least to one of our missions. So, I went to Pasco, Washington, to our mission there. And loved it. It was just fantastic. And I had my credential by then, so I was able, during the months I was there, to actually do some teaching. And I loved that. And it was a, you know, a farming community, and I got to go to the kids' homes, and ride on tractors, and, you know, it was a wonderful experience. So, by the time we made first vows, we had some experience in ministry. And some were still in school, and stayed to finish their degree, but I was able to go right into teaching. My first--right after vows, I was asked to go to Ascension, in South Central [Los Angeles] for--we made vows in March--until June, because they needed a substitute teacher in first grade there. So, I went there and I loved it. And I just assumed I would stay. And in those days, you were informed where you were going to go the next year--we still were doing that. And I remember my Regional Superior coming and saying that I was going to be moved to St. Cyril's in Encino [California] as a full-time teacher. Well, I couldn't believe it, because that's where my parents lived, was in Encino. And again, I think my mother--[laughs]--my mother prayed me there, because it wasn't that I was able to go home that often, but I saw them often. And I always look back and I would tell my mother, you know, "I think God blessed you, because you let me go, and God sent me back to you very quickly." So, I was at St. Cyril's for two years, and loved it there--taught first grade and First Communion and Reconciliation. And then, there was a need back at Ascension. And so, I was able to go back to Ascension, and I was there for eight years I think.

[00:44:08.16] SHANNON GREEN: So, this is when you're an elementary school teacher.

[00:44:11.15] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yes.

[00:44:13.14] SHANNON GREEN: But sounds like you're doing religious education as well. So, what were those experiences like in the classroom in those days?

[00:44:23.00] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I loved teaching. I always had wanted to be a teacher, and I always wanted to teach the young children. And it was everything I hoped it would be. When I was student teaching, I had some very challenging experiences, and it was good for me to kind of get thrown in and learn that it's not all roses. But all of the elementary--well, Ascension and St. Cyril's--the faculties I was with--in fact, just this last week I had lunch with a former Sister who was the Principal when I was at Ascension

and a teacher, who I'm the godmother for her son. And she was a young married woman when she taught at Ascension. And we've stayed in relationship all these years. But we brought albums, and we shared memories of the wonderful community we had at Ascension that year, and we also had at St. Cyril's. And my experience was, our convent was open. You know, we used to babysit Heather [??] when Mary [??] did Girl Scouts. She was in a basket--we brought her over and we would, you know, babysit her. We were always one with the people. Even though things weren't quite as open as they are now, my experience was that everybody was always welcome in our convent. So, I think between, really, enjoying teaching and the community that we formed with the faculty and the parents, those were very good days.

[00:46:01.02] SISTER KATHY STEIN: And then, you know, as it happens, I started doing religious education with First Communion, and Parent Ed, and then it was the time when, you know, wise people in community said, "You know, it might be time for you to start looking at some more education if you're going to be doing this." And I said, "Well, I'm happy to be spending the rest of my life teaching the first grade--I love it." And, "Well, that's fine, but maybe you want to get some education for your Adult Ed." So, I did. I went to the University of San Francisco (USF) in the summers. So, I taught during the year and went to USF in the summers and got a Masters in Religious Studies. And then, stayed at Ascension, but transitioned from teaching to doing Religious Ed in the parish with the--running the Religious Ed program and doing the Adult Ed. And again, I loved it. The experience of graduate school was wonderful for me. In those years, many Sisters--not only Carondelets from all over the United States but different communities--would go to USF and stay at Star of the Sea. It was a big convent that we had up there. So, the summer communities at Star of the Sea were just wonderful. And, you know, Sisters from different areas, and the changes that were happening, and different forms of prayer, and then everything we were learning at USF with the Jesuits was very stretching. And relating to Sisters from all over and priests from all over, but also lay people. We had a lot of lay people in our classes that were getting a Masters in Religious Studies, because that was the beginning of the time when the laity was being recognized in the Church--you didn't have to be a Sister or a priest to do these things. So, it was very stretching and very enjoyable. And so, the transition to doing Religious Ed was great---I loved it.

[00:47:58.28] SHANNON GREEN: Was there--is there a particular theologian or maybe concept from Vatican II or was there something that was particularly animating or transforming for you during those--during that--graduate studies time?

[00:48:14.07] SISTER KATHY STEIN: During graduate studies, the professor that we're--many professors were--we just had wonderful professors, because they would come in for the summer--the Jesuits would bring them in. But Kenan Osborne [Father Kenan B. Osborne, OFM (1930-)] was one that I had several classes on, and his whole concept of Church, and Church as "People of God". And it was what we were living--we were starting to live--but he was able to put the words around it. And our community then had him come and do workshops with the community, too. But I think it was the first time though that I also felt the pull that we continue to feel today. Because I had a pastor who was hesitant to let go of his authority--or share his authority, and hesitant to see women taking roles in the Church that he was not real comfortable with. And we were--you know, I'd go away for the summer and come back on fire, and then it was like, oh--this is not what I'm hoping for for the future of the Church. So, I think it was very real. And then coming from my Mount background, "Well, what do you mean I'm a woman and I can't do it? What difference does that make?" It just wasn't in my realm of experience that that would ever be questioned. So--but I think what I also learned from the Sisters of St. Joseph that there's ways of confronting, and so if I'd gone in after I came back in August from summer school and said, "This is the way it's going to be in the Religious Ed program," I probably would have been fired. But there's a way to, you know, gently, subtly introduce new ideas. And it wasn't that it was always comfortable--there were times of--when, you know, we rubbed against each other, but also doing it in a reconciling manner--and having Sisters to talk to about it, which was important.

[00:50:26.21] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah. When we were interviewing Sister Diane this morning we had kind of a discussion about--you know, in the Seventies and Eighties there's a lot of people going to graduate theology studies, Creation Spirituality movement--all these movements are kind of exploding, and the role of women, the role of the laity--it seems to be going in one direction, and then the Church kind of--

[00:50:51.14] SISTER KATHY STEIN: --kind of--um-hm--

[00:50:52.10] SHANNON GREEN: [laughs]--doesn't quite--

[00:50:54.06] SISTER KATHY STEIN: --doesn't--

[00:50:54.27] SHANNON GREEN: --follow through. And I was asking her, you know, how she coped with that as a religious educator/catechist. And you know--so was that a kind of a topic of discussion in the communities--

[00:51:09.04] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Well, I have to say--what you mentioned about the Church kind of going in one direction and our studies going in another direction--about at that point I finished my masters and was in--doing the Religious Education. The following year I was asked by the community to go into formation ministry full-time. So, I was taken out of the parish, and had the--wonderful opportunity to receive some really good, solid training in formation and spirituality, and spiritual direction, and those kind of things. And so, the--if I had stayed in the parish--and stayed in Religious Ed, I would have felt much more of a "rub" with the direction that the Church was going. I didn't have that, because for nine years then, was in formation ministry. I worked with vocations, I worked with candidates, I worked with Temporary Professed, and so it was a wonderful time--well, formation is not easy--but it was a wonderful time because so much was changing in religious life--and continuing to happen. And so, I had the opportunity to be educated in that, and to share it with newer members. And in those days, we still had good numbers of people coming to community. And so, I lived--I didn't live--I was not Novice Director. So, I lived in a local community, and candidates also lived in local communities, so at one point I had--I think, six candidates in different communities. I was in my community, and then I would go around and visit them, and have sessions with them, and classes and things like that. Same with Temporary Professed--they had--they were out on mission, so, my role was to be with them. And then vocation ministry too--Joyce Gaspardo [Sister Joyce Marie Gaspardo] and I did that together. And we would have days and weekends and "come-and-see's" as we called them then. But lots was happening in formation, and how formation was handled, and--so, things had changed drastically when I was in formation--they were changing again in the Eighties.

[00:53:37.07] SHANNON GREEN: What were some of the driving trends or factors in that, do you think?

[00:53:42.23] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Driving trends in formation in the Eighties was starting to look at people as individuals. Always before, formation had been formation--you fit into it. Starting in the Eighties--or maybe before that, but when I started in formation ministry--people were entering from all different walks of life, all different ages, all different experiences. My first year as Candidate Director was the first year that candidates had not lived together in a house with the Candidate Director. That was big--and how to go about that. And it was the first year that they had ministries. So, at that point--now the candidates keep their ministry that they're in--their job. Back in the Eighties, they did a ministry with the CSJs, so, they might be at the Mount, or at St. Mary's Academy, or an elementary school, but they worked, and they lived in a community. So, it was taking each person--or attempting to take each person where they were and working with them. And so, that was--it was different. For some of our Sisters that was a real change--the concept that the candidates aren't in a house someplace with their Director directing them. We were new--I was new--our team was new--so, we didn't know. We'd never been Directors when we lived with them. So, it wasn't that new to us. We just sort of learned it. And the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange had started doing that a year before--a couple of years before we did. And our Religious Formation Conference--we had a group in our area--and so we learned from other communities. We did this together. We always said, "We don't have to reinvent the wheel," talk to other communities about how they're doing it. And so, a lot of change was happening during those years. People would come and leave more, I think, than they did when I entered, and before that.

[00:55:54.29] SHANNON GREEN: Was that at all distressing for you, as a Formation Minister, to see that?

[00:56:01.07] SISTER KATHY STEIN: It--yes. Yes. Because I could see--well, sometimes it was clear, that this was right. You know, this isn't a good fit for this person. And that made it a little bit easier. But even if it wasn't the right fit, there was usually something about--like, Sister Miriam Therese used to tell us, "If you wouldn't make a good wife and mother, you wouldn't make a good Sister of St. Joseph." And so, I would see that in these women. Yeah, their path probably is meant to be other, but they would make a wonderful

Sister of St. Joseph. And I'm still in contact with people that were in--I was their Director. And they're married and their children are doing wonderful things, and I look at them now and I think--this one I'm thinking of in particular--she would have been a wonderful Sister of St. Joseph. I can think of several people right now. If it had been right for her and she had stayed, I would have been thrilled. But it wasn't. And so, they will be the first to say the charism that they carry in them that's CSJ is now shared with their families, or in their ministries--it's out there, you know, all over. So, yeah, to be honest, it was always hard when somebody left. People in my own group who left was hard--but usually right.

[00:57:38.02] SHANNON GREEN: Since you brought up the charism, let's start to bring that in. Since you entered after Vatican II, I'm wondering how conversation about charism--the--it might have been different for you than other Sisters who entered before--who say, "We never talked about the charism," you know, or talked about "Humility and Charity". So, what is your memory and kind of sense of how explicit or articulated the charism was for you as a young Sister, and then in formation ministry how you talked about charism?

[00:58:10.19] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Okay. We'll talk about ministry some more later?

[00:58:13.01] SHANNON GREEN: Sure, yes.

[00:58:14.12] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Okay.

[00:58:14.28] SHANNON GREEN: Oh, yeah. [all laugh]. Not going to let the rest of that go. I just wanted to start weaving this in a little bit--.

[00:58:17.28] SISTER KATHY STEIN: [laughs]. I want to talk about ministry.

[00:58:20.22] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah, of course.

[00:58:22.05] SISTER KATHY STEIN: The charism--how the charism was articulated when we were in formation. The words were "Unity and Reconciliation". And we had just had a chapter, and the new Constitution, those were the words. Did I think about charism as much as we do today? No. Or as much as our newer members do today? No. I'm back full circle working with our two candidates, and you know, they can articulate the charism and the mission. I don't think if you would have asked us to do that when we were candidates or postulants or novices we would have had those words, because it was--we were just starting to have that focus. But as I look back, whether we talk about "Humility and Charity", or "Unity and Reconciliation", or now "Unifying Love", and responding to the "dear neighbor", it's within us. And it's within people that we minister with. We feel it. I'm talking to Shannon Green right now, and when we interviewed Shannon for this position as CSJ Institute Director, the charism was within her. She didn't have the words yet, because she hadn't worked with the Sisters of St. Joseph. But it was there. And so, that's that mystery of charism. It's how we do what we do--because we do so many different things. How do we do it? How do we relate to people? How did the Sisters at the Mount relate to us in the Seventies? And now we're relating to all kinds of people with that same love and respect and compassion, that responding to the needs of the dear neighbor. I think the words are important, because we need to be able to articulate the charism, but it's--some religious communities, everybody in their community will give you the same answer, when you say, "What's your charism?" One of our charisms is we're very diverse, and so probably as many people as you would ask would come out with something different. But I think all of us can pause and go deeper within and say, "I know what it is. I know what it is and I see it in you and you and you." But maybe not have the same words for it.

[01:01:10.18] SHANNON GREEN: So, when you were doing formation ministry, did that--did you see this--you know, did you start to see the beginnings of kind of where we are now in terms of talking of charism? Was that kind of building into formation?

[01:01:25.15] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Just beginning--because we use the words "Unity and Reconciliation"--because I was Formation Director in the Eighties. And when I look at then to working with candidates now, it's very different, because everything we talk about is informed by the Mission and the charism. It's just--it just is. Not only with our candidates, but I'm involved working with our Joseph Worker volunteers. And not only at the work site--one of the Joseph Workers works with me, but also in relating to them as a group.

They have the words--they can articulate the charism. And so, I think it continues to evolve, but much more--we're much more conscious now than we were even in the Eighties of articulating the charism.

[01:02:22.28] SHANNON GREEN: Let's go back to--so, after you were in formation ministry [unintelligible]--so, what were you called to after formation ministry?

[01:02:37.05] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Well, after nine years in formation ministry--and that was a real turning point in my life--I turned forty when I was in formation ministry, I--and many formation directors will say this--you really test your own vocation when you're in formation ministry, and especially when you're at that age, you know, just moving into your forties, everybody questions their life and their commitment, and who they are, and who God is. And so, during those years, I hung on to my faith and to the faith that God could work through me in the lives of these women. But it was real clear to me that it wasn't me that was in charge--it was God, because I was beginning to have questions myself about religious life, about my spirituality--all very normal, but it can be challenging when you're the Formation Director. But not uncommon, and we had good support as Formation Directors and Vocation Directors, to be able to talk about these things. So, after I finished in formation, I asked to make a thirty-day retreat. And I went to Gloucester, Massachusetts, to the Jesuits, and that, I think, I know, is my touchstone experience of my spirituality in the second part of my life, if I divide my life before formation ministry and after formation ministry. Because at that point, very honestly, I went to discern whether I was going to stay in religious life or not. And I didn't know what--which way I was going to go. And I had a friend who had--the year before--gone on a thirty-day retreat and come back with the decision to leave community. And so, I was open, but I knew I needed some distance to be able to do this. And to my surprise, once again, God touched me very deeply, and said to me, "You know, it doesn't matter what life you're in. What matters is your relationship with Jesus," and the way you share that relationship with others. And so, the urgency to do something different or start a new life or--it wasn't there anymore. It was--what my desire is, is to deepen my relationship with God--as I had twenty years earlier when I entered. But in a different way, because I was now in my forties. And, so I left that retreat recommitted to living my vowed life, but not knowing where God was going to lead me. And I remember--oh, I loved Gloucester, and have been back there several times, but that experience. And I had a wonderful Director, a Sister of St. Joseph of Boston, who just passed away this last year, and we stayed in touch all these years. And she had the charism. As the Sisters at the Mount did for us, she took me where I was, didn't tell me what she thought I should do--though she probably had an opinion--but took me where I was, and said that I was--I was just fine wherever I was and whatever I did, and all I needed to do was listen and God would make it clear. And God did make it clear. And again, here I still am. So, when I came back, I really didn't know what I was going to do. I'd been out of the classroom and out of the parish for ten years, so I knew I would need to do some "re-tooling" if I wanted to go back there. The way things were in the Church, I wasn't--it wasn't my first choice, because I could see people saying, "You really have to find a parish where you can work with a priest who will be collaborative." So, when I came back, the community was wanting to open a house in Orange County, because we had a couple of Sisters that were living in that area--and we called them "intentional communities"--then came together, and talked about our goals, and prayer styles, and all kinds of things to see if we really wanted to commit to this. And so, I moved to Orange County not knowing what my ministry was going to be. And the community said, "That's okay. You know, we need a group to form a community and then your ministry will flow from there." And that's when my life took a totally different turn. There was a Sister who ran Catholic Charities in Orange County and she--I knew her, and she had heard that I was moving to the area, so, I went and talked to her, and she said, "We're opening this new program and it's we're going to do programs in the parishes on substances abuse, because that's a big problem." And, you know, "Would you be interested?" And I had gotten some education when I was in formation ministry on substance abuse issues, and, you know, I had a whole folder on it. And I said, "Well, I haven't had formal training, but I have been in the parish and I have had some 'in-services' on this--yeah, I think I would like to do that." So, I went to work for Catholic Charities in Orange County, and my role was to go to parishes, talk to the priests, and say, "Would you be interested in having something in your parish on substance abuse issues?" And so, we did them in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, because there's a large Vietnamese population there. And I brought in speakers--I didn't do it--I brought in speakers in these different languages. And I was part of the Counseling Department, but not a counselor--I was Programmer. And so, it was great. And one day we were at a staff meeting, and one of the counselors said that she had been going to this homeless shelter and doing a group with the women, and it just wasn't going anyplace. You know, there wasn't enough consistency, because the women--the families would stay and then they'd leave, you

know. And so, for her, and for the interns, it really wasn't a good fit. But they didn't want to leave them high and dry with nobody. Would anybody be willing to go and take this group? And so, I said, "Well, I'm not a counselor, but I used to go to the House of Ruth and be with the women, and I guess we didn't have a group, but we just would sit around and talk. I can do it as long as you're not looking for a therapy group." And they said, "Yeah! Great! Go!" So, I did. And it was Thomas House Family Shelter. And at that time, Thomas House was only a couple of years old, and they didn't have paid staff, but they were trying to--they had two or three apartments and maybe four or five families, and they were trying to figure out--this group of volunteers--how to help these people. And at that time, they only stayed like thirty days and then they moved on to something else. So, I started going once a week as part of my job at Catholic Charities, and just sitting with the women. I was able to use my Spanish. I was--it was--I absolutely loved it. And so, as--probably a year later, the little Board of Directors at Thomas House was making the decision to do some grant writing and hire somebody to do Programming. And they asked me if I would be open to that. And I said, "I'm not a social worker, I'm not--". And they said, "Well, neither are we." Thomas House was founded by a group of people in a parish who saw people standing on street corners and wanted to do something, so they rented an apartment in this building and took in families, and came down at night and fixed dinner and--that's how it started. So, they were real estate agents and, you know--nobody had any social service training. When I look back I think, oh Lord. [laughs]. So, I--but something in me really wanted to do it, even though I had no idea what the "it" was. So, I remember going--I went to my Regional Superior and I said--you know, I talked to her about it, and she said, "Well, you seem to have the passion for it, and that's what we do, we respond to needs. And we're not always totally educated when we go into responding to a need, but we get the education as we go along." And I said, "Well, there's one little--other little challenge--they don't have any money to pay me." And she said, "Oh, okay--well, let's talk about this." So, at that point, our community had a fund--we still do--for Sisters working with the economically poor. And the idea is that the fund can fund us, but it's the responsibility of the person to help the agency fund-raise so that can become a paid position. Because it doesn't help the agency just to have a free person, because eventually they're going to have to hire somebody. So, the community gave me permission to say yes to the request, and also, for the first year, to not be paid--with the understanding that after the first year then, we would need--if this worked--start paying me. And so, I started. And it was myself and a Jesuit volunteer. And the office was a bedroom--there was three bedrooms in this apartment. One was our little office and we had two families living in there with us. And that's how it started. And I was there eighteen years, and my life just totally changed direction during those years.

[01:13:37.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Thomas House grew, the Board grew, the staff grew--we eventually bought the building, and another building next door had a couple of units. So we had--so we could have sixteen families, or more, depending on the size of the families. And we were able to, little by little--everything was slow, because we didn't have money--but we eventually had volunteer grant writers, and then were able to hire grant writers. And our first thing we did was to have a children's program. So, in this--besides the two families in the office, we used the living room for the after school program, and had volunteers come in and mentor the kids. Now, that's a paid position, and there's a whole apartment that's the children's program. And we--I was able to go back to Catholic Charities and they sent counselors, so not only did we have a group, but we were able to do individual counseling for each of the families. And then we had employment services added. And then we worked with the city to get the housing vouchers for the families. But for myself personally, it was--I think it's the way Sisters of St. Joseph do things. We see the need, but then we have to learn at the same time. I remember calling up Social Services and saying that I was the new Director at Thomas House, and I really didn't know anything about the welfare system, cash aid, food stamps, Medi-cal, all those things, could I come down and meet with somebody. And they were very gracious and gave me an in-service and you know, little by little, I learned those things. But the important thing was tapping into the community, because I didn't need to do it. It was finding people who had the skills that we needed. And then it just kept growing.

[01:15:44.12] SHANNON GREEN: What you just said about--that you don't need to do it, and tapping into--that strikes me as kind of a CSJ approach to leadership in some ways. Sister Theresa Kvale just talked about collaboration. And we do want to kind of lift up some kind of leadership characteristics, especially for our students--our young women. So, could you just say more about, as a leader of a growing organization, any, you know, markers of a CSJ leader, or recommendations, or wisdom, that kind of thing?

[01:16:17.29] SISTER KATHY STEIN: CSJ leadership, whether it's leadership in community, or leadership in

our ministries--it comes out of who we are personally. So, we all have different styles of leadership. So, I think, the core is our charism--is that we see the need, we identify it--that's the big thing, is identifying the need, and then we start circling around it and bringing in people to be with us and work with us in responding to that need. So, if I had approached Thomas House by myself, Thomas House would still be two apartments with six families. But that's not how we do it as Sisters of St. Joseph. We don't have to be the key person, or necessarily the one who makes all the decisions or has all the ideas. It's identifying the needs, and then pulling in the people. And people respond. People want to be asked--people want to be able to give. And lots of times they don't know how or there's no venue for them to give. And so, I think that's our role as leaders, is to make opportunities available for people to come in and lead, and then to know when it's time for us to step back and let them take over. We have a Maxim--Maxim 85 [Maxims of Little Institute [MLI] by Father Jean-Pierre Médaille, SJ (1610-1699)]--that you bring things almost to completion and then whenever possible, you hand it over to someone else to finish it and take the credit. And when I left Thomas House, in my resignation letter and the newsletter, I started with that Maxim. And it doesn't mean it's not hard to let go, but if we're true to who we are we know when an organization or group can move on without us. And to hang on, then, isn't the work of the Spirit. Our job is to help other people to be able to do this. And, you know, it's happening all over the place with our sponsored ministries right now. And for us to stay--I'm still on the Council of Trustees at Thomas House--not on the Board, because their needed to be a break, so that the new Executive Director could be in charge. But the Council of Trustees is to keep people that are timing off the board, keeping them involved in the mission. And we still have the founder's wife on the Council of Trustees. I'll always be involved in Thomas House, because probably some of my deepest growth came during those days, and--a story about my time at Thomas House. You know, being an only child and not having my own children was always difficult for me. And I discovered early on at Thomas House we had many women--pregnant women come with no support--no significant other, no family support, whatever. And you have to have a child to come, so there was also other little kids. So, early on--I remember the first one--I said, "You know, if you don't have anybody to go with you when you have your baby, I'd be happy to go." And she said, "Oh! That would be wonderful!" And I did. And oh my gosh--anybody that's ever been in the birth--at the birth of a child knows that experience is just incredible. Now the mother did--when I told her--this is the first time I'd ever experienced it--when I told the mother that it was probably the most spiritual experience I'd ever had, holding that baby when it came out and took its first breath. And she said, "Yeah, easy for you to say it was a spiritual experience--you've never been on the other side of it!" [laughs]. True. True. But that was something that I was able to do during my eighteen years, was companion women when they had their babies--whether it was a C-section or being induced or just went into labor at the shelter, or--you know, midnight on Christmas Eve, you know, being with a woman in labor. And that's something that I had to let go of in entering community that I would never be in labor in a delivery room, but God gave me that gift, that experience. And one of our mothers came back to the shelter--she had the baby, and the next day, had an infection--had to take her back to the hospital. And as she was--they were taking her to the ambulance, she said, "Promise me, Sister--promise me you'll take the baby home with you." And nowadays, we wouldn't have done that. But twenty years ago, I said, "Okay, I will take the baby home." So, I was living with five other Sisters--no, four other Sisters--and I come--I call and I said, "How would you feel if I brought a baby home for the night?" And they said, "How old is the baby?" And I said, "One day." And they said, "Well, do you know what to do with it?" And I said, "No." [laughs]. So, I called a pediatrician that we knew that used to come and help us out at the shelter, and I said, "I have this one-day-old baby and I'm taking it home tonight. I need help." And so, she talked me through what to get. And we had one staff person at that time--that was early on--and she was a mom, so she--you know, she got some stuff and sent it home with me. And so, I mean, it was quite an experience. We had the baby for three days. But I had to go to work in the morning. And so, the first morning when I came to work with the--you know, the car seat and the bag and the baby, and I mean--I hadn't slept all night because the baby was in my room. And I came in and one by one I could see moms coming out of their apartments, hanging over the balcony, looking at me laughing--[laughs]--because they, you know, the experience I'd never had before, and I had to go to work. So, things like that were--I just see as gifts from God during my time at Thomas House.

[01:23:09.09] KELBY THWAITS: [all laugh]. Sorry, I just have to laugh a little.

[01:23:10.20] SHANNON GREEN: [laughs]. That's a good--

[01:23:13.23] KELBY THWAITS: What an experience, because it's something that you just never expected--

[01:23:18.17] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Never expected.

[01:23:18.28] KELBY THWAITS: You thought you'd given all of that up really--and then you also got to feel the pain of staying up all night--

[01:23:25.20] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Staying up all night--

[01:23:27.16] KELBY THWAITS: --and taking care of a kid and [unintelligible]--

[01:23:28.23] SISTER KATHY STEIN: --going to work the next day--exactly. Okay, so you know.

[01:23:34.20] SHANNON GREEN: It explains that picture of you that is so famous, of you holding a baby.

[01:23:40.10] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yeah, that. I don't know. I said, I think that baby's about twenty now. Yeah. But it was always such a privilege to have someone invite me into their life at that intimate moment--and usually very painful moment, because they were alone, whatever the reason that they were alone was very painful. And so, I think those were times when--I always--I often see God in the person I'm with in ministry, but during those moments it was like, there's no way that I cannot believe that God is right here in this moment putting me here. What do I know about labor and delivery? Didn't matter--it was presence--it was "being with". And the woman knowing that no matter what the circumstances, why she was there, how she got there didn't matter--it was her--and she was loved and supported.

[01:24:40.14] SHANNON GREEN: I'm thinking of--you have all those years of service at Thomas House, and now you're at St. Joseph Center. So working with the homeless community in the last--in this last kind of chunk of your life has been a big focus of your passion.

[01:24:56.07] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yes.

[01:24:58.04] SHANNON GREEN: And I'm just wondering if you have any reflections on working with that population, either in light of the charism, or the needs of the times, the state of our cities, you know?

[01:25:13.06] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I've been working at St. Joseph Center for six--seven years now. And I'm doing social work. And when I started there, I had the opportunity to--I just needed something very part time because I was on Council for the community and caring for my mother. And so, I was just there in the beginning one day a week, and started out in the food pantry. And then as, you know, my life circumstances changed, they offered me to become an employee. So, I'm still in the food pantry, and I'm doing all the case management and intake and registration of our clients. And it's similar to my experience at Thomas House--not in that--we don't house the people at St. Joseph Center, but it's being part of people's lives who are suffering and who are in need, and seeing their faith and their trust. Sometimes I sit with an undocumented woman with five kids who's so afraid she's going to be picked up by immigration and what's going to happen with her kids, and I'm planning with her, you know, who can take the kids, and do you have this paper. And then seeing her faith--saying, "I know God's with me. I know God will help me through this." And I can't say to her, "God will be sure you don't get picked up by immigration, because you might. But yes, God will be with you in this, and God will be with your children." And often times they'll say, we know God is with us because St. Joseph's Center is with us. The people here care about us. There's one women who volunteers in the pantry every Wednesday, and she was chronically homeless, and was housed by St. Joseph Center workers, and now comes and gives back. And to hear her talk about her journey, and her faith, and--it's incomprehensible what she's been through in her life. And to know that we can journey with her, and continue to support her, and help her stay housed, and help her to give back--it's such a privilege. And it touches me at a place in my center that--nothing else touches me that way. I feel just so blessed to be able to sit every day with people who are so real--there's no pretense. You just get immediately down to the core of what's going on in their lives. And they come for food, but nobody's there for food unless something else is going on in their life. And so, they always ask me in the pantry, "Why do you--why don't you take a client every half an hour? Why do you take an hour?" Well, I give an hour because if they don't need an hour, that's fine, I'll do something else. But so often, we'll get into filling out the forms for the pantry, and I'll ask a question, and then it starts, you know--then they're able to share what really is the issue. And the wonderful

thing is then I can call somebody and say, "Okay, can you help this person--I have a client and this is the need," or do the referral. So once again, I don't have to do it, you know. I'm not a therapist, I'm not a housing navigator at St. Joseph Center. But I can do the linking. And again, that's what we're called to do as Sisters of St. Joseph. We don't have to do it all. We just need to help people be comfortable enough to share what their need is and then be able to say, "Just a minute, I think we can find somebody to help you with that." And once again, then, turn the person over to someone who can help them.

[01:29:32.22] SHANNON GREEN: Can you share with us--just in terms of--what's going on at St. Joseph Center these days, and kind of the current situation of homelessness in our area, and where things are headed--whether there's a specific initiative, something that's maybe hopeful, that St. Joseph Center is contributing to?

[01:29:51.09] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Well, St. Joseph Center is expanding incredibly as we speak. And a part of that is due to responding to needs that we see. And in addition, it's the money that the city has from Proposition--Measure H [Los Angeles Homeless Initiative (Measure H) (2017)]. And so, as we all know, the situation of homelessness in LA--people living in homelessness is just increasing and increasing--more and more families. So St. Joseph Center now has a program for families experiencing homelessness. So, they're referred from 211, from the emergency referral system, and they can come--the social workers can get them into temporary shelter or into motels, and then the housing navigators work with them to try and help them with some kind of affordable housing. But the newest thing is our Outreach Teams. We have two new Outreach Teams. One is for Venice, and the other is for the wider LA area. And those teams are made up of a social worker and a nurse and a housing navigator and a therapist. And they come to work every morning at seven o'clock and--huddle, I think, is what they do. And when I come to work it's later--they're usually on their way out already. And I always stop and I just put my hand out, say, "Be careful--God bless you--you're doing God's work." And they fan out into the neighborhood. The team from Venice--there are certain streets where all of our people experiencing homelessness sleep. So they try and get there early in the morning when they're first waking up. And the Sisters in Holy Family community and some of our Associates make "hygiene bags", with water and socks and energy bars and things. And our Program Director for the Outreach Program and one of the case workers--I brought them up to the Holy Family community and tell them what an impact those hygiene bags have on the people, and what a help they are to the social workers, because it helps them engage people. So they can walk up to somebody who's just waking up and say, "Would you like this bottle of water and something to eat?" And they may just take it with no interchange. But the next time they go, maybe that will break down a little bit. And these are our chronically homeless persons that this team is working with. So, it's wonderful to be able to--in fact, last week I could hardly drive my car, there were so many hygiene bags in it. I was--I could not have taken a passenger. And I arrived at St. Joseph Center, went to the office and said to the team, "Guess what?" And they went, "Ah, you got 'em!" And they all came out and took the bags, and I could see them going out. And so to be able to link our Sisters in Holy Family community, who you know, have been doing ministry for sixty, seventy, eighty years, and continue to do ministry--very important ministry--in helping these young social workers that are going out and doing what needs to be done--a lot more needs to happen. But hopefully this is a beginning.

[01:33:21.11] SHANNON GREEN: That's great. I'm conscious of our time, and the--is there anything that you had reflected on as you thought about today that I haven't asked you about or you haven't had the chance to share, that you would like to share?

[01:33:36.26] SISTER KATHY STEIN: One of your questions was, "Are there any Sisters that we haven't mentioned." And there is a Sister who was at Carondelet Center when I was a young Sister--her name was Sister Petronella [??]--very quiet, very humble Sister. And I used to always be so impressed because when we'd have an event, she would go into the chapel and she would sit down, and then she would welcome anybody that came in to sit with her, rather than going and finding her friends and sitting down. She was so welcoming. And I said to her one day, "Sister, you know, when I'm older, I really want to be like you. Can you give me some advice?" And she said--she thought a minute, and she said, "Well, my experience is, when I've gotten older, I'm just a lot more like I was when I was younger. So, if you want to be a certain way when you're older, you better start now." And I've never forgotten that. I have never forgotten that. And that was somebody who probably didn't have a lot of notoriety or fame in their life, but touched lives so quietly and gently and just exuded our charism of unifying love.

[01:35:10.21] SHANNON GREEN: Are you looking ahead to any--for yourself, any changes in ministry or any hopes for your own kind of future ministry? And you don't have to say it. But if there's anything on the horizon that--too soon?

[01:35:29.20] SISTER KATHY STEIN: I'll say it afterwards.

[01:35:33.28] SHANNON GREEN: That's okay. [unintelligible]. You know, because you're one of the younger people we're interviewing so, this is not an assumption that--there's more to come.

[01:35:42.22] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yes, there is more to come, yes. And that's been my experience my whole life is, I've never planned out the next step, but God always just seems to put it in front of me. And if I need to learn something or be trained, the community offers that option. But again, it's who we are as Sisters of St. Joseph. It's seeing the need. Sometimes the need is presented to us, sometimes we see it ourselves. But for people that are, you know, educated or working with the Sisters of St. Joseph, or want to know what advice we could give them, I would say, continue to see the needs and know that it's possible to respond to them. You might not know how it's going to happen, but the needs will continue long after there are Sisters of St. Joseph that can respond to all of them. And so, all of our partners in ministry and that we're in relationship with are the ones to see those needs, and we'll be right with you to respond.

[01:36:51.04] SHANNON GREEN: Thank you.

[01:36:52.11] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Thank you.

[01:36:54.26] KELBY THWAITS: You've given us so much good stuff. I have a question and if you're comfortable answering it or sharing your personal opinion, that would be great, and if not, that's no big deal either. People feel differently about women being ordained as priests, and you've had some--it seems like you have some feelings or thoughts on the idea. Would you be willing to share that, and give background, or just kind of--it's not so much trying to figure out where you stand, but rather, what's your feeling and interpretation on that concept, and the pros and the cons, or whatever you want to share, if you're comfortable.

[01:37:39.02] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Sure. About women's ordination--I personally do not feel a call to ordination. I personally feel a call to all these wonderful ministries that God has led me to, but the call to ordination is not one that I have felt. I do know people who do experience that call. And I know the teaching of the Church, and I know it's been reaffirmed recently, but I don't understand the reason for it. I mean, I know the reasons, but I can't understand why there's still not openness to women being ordained. And the reason I can't understand it is because probably, as a Sister of St. Joseph, I see the needs. I see so many people that are longing for sacramental ministry, sacramental presence, and there are not enough priests to respond--in other countries, but in our country also, as we're seeing more and more Pastoral Associates who are women. And so, if there was no need, probably then we wouldn't be thinking about this. I don't think it's so much the personal thing that these women want to be priests. I look at it more as there's a need out there. People are not being ministered to. And they could be. They absolutely could be. And we see that from the women who are the Pastoral Associates in the parishes. But there's just certain things that they can't fully minister to the people who are in need. We're--maybe there's an opening to deacons--women deacons, who knows. Will it happen in my--in our lifetime? Probably not. I can't imagine it's not going to happen if things keep evolving the way they are. But then, they say in the Church, it takes hundreds of years to make a change, and this is a big one. So, the women that I know that have felt that call and have become--entered the Episcopal Church and been ordained--it's just so right. It's not a big deal. They are just ministering--ministering like we all minister, but in a sacramental role that--because they have ordination. So, hopefully someday.

[01:40:39.17] SHANNON GREEN: I think Mary had one question.

[01:40:41.12] MARY TRUNK: If you don't mind answering to Shannon, that would be great. I was just wondering if you could describe "formation ministry" and "vocation ministry".

[01:40:49.01] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Okay.

[01:40:49.26] MARY TRUNK: You've talked about it a lot, and you've said such wonderful things. It would be great to have a really clear definition of what those are.

[01:40:55.05] SHANNON GREEN: More for the background.

[01:40:56.20] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Yeah. That's a good idea.

[01:40:56.11] MARY TRUNK: That would be great. Thank you.

[01:41:00.04] KELBY THWAITS: Thanks, by the way. That was very well spoken and very helpful I think--for your perspective, thanks for sharing it.

[01:41:06.19] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Thank you. I really hadn't articulated it that way, but it is--it's the need. So--yeah. Okay. In religious life, we use the term "formation ministry" for the process that men or women participate in when they're moving toward vowed life. "Vocation ministry"--we talk about that in relation to making our life known--going out and inviting people to look at religious life--inviting them to come in and to participate in days or weekends or prayer groups or whatever, to learn more about religious life. And if they're interested and start the process, then we call that "formation ministry", or "initial personal development", or "initial membership", or--there's many different words for it. The interesting thing is that now, that concept has broadened to not just vowed religious life, but Associates and Co-Associates in religious communities who are lay partners go through a "formation" process. Our partners in ministry--we could call that going through a formation process in the charism and the Mission. And so, as in any group, learning about the life and the commitment--if there is a commitment involved in it, would be "formation ministry".

[01:42:54.14] SHANNON GREEN: Would you just share what the root of "vocation"--what the word--the term means--where it comes from--

[01:43:01.13] SISTER KATHY STEIN: You remember?

[01:43:02.12] SHANNON GREEN: Well, "vocare" [Latin], "the call". And just about "call" and how that idea of vocation has broadened into beyond--similar kind of--just a little more exposition on that?

[01:43:14.15] SISTER KATHY STEIN: Okay. The concept of "vocation ministry"--that word "vocation", coming from "vocare" or "call", used to be, many years ago--many, many years ago--there was one "call" to religious life--to vowed religious life--that you'd talk about vocation ministry--it would just be assumed it was moving toward helping people discern a call to religious life. Now in vocation ministry, when I was doing more vocation ministry I would say, "I went to many more weddings than I did vow ceremonies" of people that I journeyed with, because it's the whole idea of helping people discern their call, whether that call is to marriage or single life or religious life, of what kind of call to ministry it is--it's much, much broader now. And so, there are fewer people who are choosing vowed religious life in response to their vocation. But now we see that whatever they're called to is where they're living out their vocation. We have a House of Discernment--Medaille Community that our community sponsors, and often times people will ask, "Well, how many people from the Discernment House have entered religious life?" Well, that's not the question that we ask. The question is, how many women that have lived at the Discernment House have found their next step in life--have deepened their spirituality and found the path that God is leading them on.

[01:44:53.22] SHANNON GREEN: That's great, thank you. Did that help, Mary?

[01:44:56.18] [Director's comments].

[01:45:23.04] End of interview.